

Testimony before the Committee on Children

March 5, 2012

In favor of HB6526 Toxics Disclosure and Innovation for Healthy Children

I would like to thank the Co-chairs and the members of the Select Committee on Children for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Virginia Gerena. I live in Hartford. I am a member of the **Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice** and **Advocacy Unlimited**. I have been an advocate for more than ten years on many issues, particularly asthma and learning and developmental disabilities.

I am here to testify **in favor** of **HB 6526 Toxics Disclosure and Innovation for Healthy Children**.

A growing body of scientific research suggests that exposure to toxic chemicals in products in our homes and in our environment is the number #1 suspect for the rise of many serious diseases in the U.S including cancers and learning and developmental disorders.

I am particularly concerned that everyday products contain chemicals that are neurotoxins and endocrine disruptors that can have an impact on brain development. My community suffers from extremely high rates of childhood asthma and learning disabilities. This is very costly in terms of medical treatment, educational disruption, and individual suffering.

When every day products are incinerated in Hartford, the toxins in them are released into our air. These toxins contribute to the high rate of asthma and other problems in our neighborhoods. Thus members of my family and community suffer from exposure to these toxins by the air we breathe as well in the products we use.

Thousands of chemicals were given approval without testing for safety when the federal Toxic Substances Control Act was passed in the 1970's. Many more have been introduced since then; few have been adequately tested and even fewer have been regulated when problems have been found.

With over 80,000 chemicals in use at this time, we can't solve the problem of toxins in everyday products by replacing one chemical at a time. RB 6526 Toxics Disclosure and Innovation for Healthy Children creates a process for the identification of toxins of high concern and a way to take action to reduce their use. California, Washington and Maine have developed such a process. We need to get started on this process.

I urge you to take favorable action on RB 6526 Toxics Disclosure and Innovation for Healthy Children.

Thank you,

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